

And then we do things that breaks the camel's back. Just a few days ago, I wrote a letter to the Department of Labor when they were closing the door on comments about their overtime regulation that would cut into the overtime of hard-working Americans. When I said to my constituents, Can you believe it, that they are going to give you time off, that you do not know when you will get the time off, instead of overtime?," they were outraged. We put an amendment on the floor to prevent that. Lo and behold, it was defeated.

This Labor-HHS bill is absolutely the worst, Mr. Speaker. We needed to vote it down. We did not vote it down. We need to throw it out and start working for the American people.

The unemployment rate jumped to 6.4 percent in June—highest since April 1994. The 6.4 percent unemployment rate is the highest unemployment rate since April 1994—nine years ago. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics data released this morning, the national unemployment rate jumped to 6.4 percent in June from 6.1 percent in May. The 0.3 percentage point jump was the largest month-to-month rise since the September 11th terrorist attack.

The unemployment rate was 6.8% in Texas for May 2003—that is higher than the national average. The Number of Unemployed Has Now Reached 9.4 Million. Similarly, the number of unemployed rose to 9.4 million in June from 9.0 million in May. Just in the last three months, the number of unemployed has shot up by 913,000. Furthermore, 9.4 million is an increase of 59 percent in the number of unemployed since January 2001.

African Americans have cause for real concern because the African American unemployment rate for June 2003 is 11.8%, up from 10.8% in May 2003. There are now 1,971,000 unemployed African Americans.

Since President Bush was inaugurated in January 2001, the economy has lost a total of 3.1 million private-sector jobs—with the economy shedding another 31,000 private-sector jobs in June. Indeed, since the beginning of the year, the economy has shed an additional 307,000 private-sector jobs. It is truly astonishing that more than two years after the recession began in March 2001, the economy is still losing jobs.

No President since World War II has seen job losses during his tenure. President Bush seems destined to break this record. More than halfway through his term, he has lost more than 88,000 jobs per month. The poor economy under the Bush Administration has had a particularly devastating impact on the Nation's manufacturing sector—a sector that historically has provided an important underpinning for our economy. In June itself, the economy lost an additional 56,000 manufacturing jobs. Indeed, overall, 2.4 million of the net loss of 3.1 million private-sector jobs since January 2001 have been in the manufacturing sector—a staggering statistic.

The unemployment rate for African Americans jumped to 11.8 percent in June—up from 10.8 in May, and significantly higher than the 8.2 percent rate back in January 2001. The unemployment rate for Hispanics stood at 8.4 percent in June—similar to the 8.2 percent in May but significantly higher than the 7.5 per-

cent in April. Back in January 2001, the Hispanic unemployment rate was 5.9 percent.

In June, the number of those unemployed for more than 26 weeks was 2.0 million—up by 106,000 from May. The figure of 2.0 million is more than triple the number of Americans unemployed for more than 26 weeks in January 2001—when it stood at 648,000.

Despite the fact that the recession began more than two years ago, the job market remains remarkably weak. The average length of a job search is now 19.8 weeks—about five months. Indeed, the average unemployed worker has applied for 29 different jobs. It is estimated that there are more than three unemployed workers for every available job. Back in January 2001, the average length of a job search was 12.6 weeks.

In January 2003, House Democrats unveiled a responsible economic plan for creating jobs and jumpstarting the economy. According to economists, the Democratic package would have created more than 1 million jobs in 2003, without increasing the long-term deficit—by putting money and purchasing power in the hands of consumers, giving tax breaks to small businesses and encouraging business investment, and providing adequate help to cash-strapped states in order to avoid tax increases and service cutbacks at the state level. Unfortunately, the GOP-controlled Congress ignored the Democratic plan and instead enacted a fiscally irresponsible \$350 billion tax cut package targeted to the wealthiest taxpayers—a package that will create enormous long-term deficits, not jobs. Furthermore, the GOP tax cuts will starve key investments to promote economic growth, such as education and infrastructure, and will leave middle-class taxpayers paying a greater share of all taxes.

MILITARY DEATH GRATUITY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, to my left are photographs of just a few of the men and women that were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan in the last year and a half. And the reason I came to the floor is because we passed the House in a very bipartisan way legislation to bring some tax relief to our men and women in uniform, and I came to the floor because the other body has not taken this legislation up.

I happen to have a bill, H.R. 693, it is called the Military Death Gratuity Improvement Act of 2003. A lot of people do not know this throughout this country, but every time a man or woman in uniform, whether it is wartime or non-wartime, is killed, the family gets what is called a death gratuity. Quite frankly it is not enough, but it is \$6,000 that is given to the family. In 1991 they raised the death gratuity from \$3,000 to \$6,000, but they failed to take the tax off \$3,000. So therefore at the end of the year the family who has lost a loved one fighting for freedom to protect us and this great Nation will probably get a tax bill from the IRS. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, I think it is abso-

lutely unacceptable that this Congress would allow the family of a deceased man or woman in uniform who has died fighting for this country to get a bill from Uncle Sam saying they owe a tax on a small amount of money, \$6,000.

So I wanted to come to the floor tonight because I have three bases in my district, Camp Lejeune Marine Base and Cherry Point Marine Station and also Seymour Johnson Air Force Base; and I have a great affection for our men and women in uniform, all services, not just those that I named, the Marines and Air Force, but all. And, again, I think that as we debate these large issues here in Washington, and they are very important issues no matter which side of the political aisle one is on, the least we can do is to take this tax off for the family who has lost a loved one fighting for freedom in Iraq, fighting in Operation Enduring Freedom, and I just hope that the other body, Mr. Speaker, very soon will pass this legislation, not just the bill I put in, which is part of a bigger package, but we need to make sure that in the year 2004 when the families who have lost loved ones receive their tax bill that they are not going to see a tax on the death gratuity that was given to family.

So, Mr. Speaker, I must say as I begin to close that my staff, and I want to compliment my staff, we have a photograph outside my office of everyone that has died in this fight for freedom in Operation Freedom in Iraq and also those that were killed in Afghanistan. So I hope, and again I am being repetitious but I do not apologize for it, that the Senate will do their job and make sure that the family that receives not only the notice that their son or daughter has given their life for this great Nation but also to make sure that at the end of the year that family does not receive a notice from Uncle Sam that they owe a tax on \$6,000.

So, Mr. Speaker, I close the way I do all over my district. I ask God to please bless the men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of those who have men and women in uniform. And I ask God to please in his loving arms hold the families who have lost loved ones dying for freedom, and I ask God to please bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God. I ask God to bless the President, that he will have the strength and the wisdom to lead this great Nation. And I ask three times, God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the most important issue of prescription drug cost. As a former nurse,